BUSINESS

Industrial hiring up in state

Employment grows 2.3 percent over 12 months, with more plants opening or expanding

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The state's industrial employment grew 2.3 percent over the past twelve months, according to the 2013 South Carolina Manufacturers Register, an industrial directory published annually by Manufacturers News Inc.

MNI said South Carolina saw a gain of 5,934 manufacturing jobs over the past year and is now home to 4,870 manufacturers employing 262,431 workers.

"South Carolina continues to see its manufacturing sector improve," says Tom Dubin, president of the Evanston, Ill.-based publishing company, which has been surveying industry since 1912. "Its reasonable labor costs and educated work force have made it easier for manufacturers to do business, drawing major companies to the state."

MNI said bright spots in the state over the year included Caterpillar's expansion of its hydraulic facility in Sumter, and the opening of Chinese candy maker Au'Some's new plant, also in Sumter. Honda announced an expansion of its Timmonsville factory, moving production from a facility in Mexico; Bluestar Silicones broke ground on a new plant in York; U.S. Fibers expanded its Trenton plant; and Johnson Controls opened a battery recycling facility in Florence.

MNI said industrial machinery remains South Carolina's largest manufacturing sector by employment with 34,766 jobs. Transportation equipment manufacturing has overtaken textiles/apparel as the state's second-largest sector following a 19 percent increase from continued hiring at Boeing's North Charleston plant and BMW's facility in Greer, among others. The transportation equipment sector now accounts for 31,475 jobs. Third-ranked textiles/apparel employs 27,366 South Carolina workers, the report said.